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ABSTRACT

The current debate about social studies education is the focus of this paper, and the questions and the charges raised by recent surveys and reports are addressed. Survey results from the Ravitch and Finn, the Chandler, and the National Catholic Educational Association studies reflecting student ignorance of social studies knowledge are discussed. Student inability to read and write at the appropriate grade level, student and parent apathy, and peer pressure are cited as obstacles to learning social studies. In the past, attempts to provide competent social studies teachers have included additional training, competency tests, and recertification. Today's debate focuses on process and method versus content, including the back-to-basics movement of the late 1970s and the early 1980s that succeeded in bringing the nation back to the mindset of the 1950s and 1960s and that appears to be in the ascendancy today. Attention is also given to: (1) the lack of time allocated for social studies instruction; (2) the emphasis on science and mathematics skills; (3) the length of the U.S. school year; and (4) the lack of discussion about controversial issues and democratic values and ethics. The Catholic educational system includes imparting democratic values and ethics while it tackles the most controversial and moral subjects and issues in its social studies curriculum. Ten strategies for Catholic education are suggested that may encourage schools to continue and improve this practice. (DJC)

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THE CURRENT DEBATE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES DISCIPLINE REGARDING AN EMPHASIS ON CONTENT AND PROCESS

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Brother Louis Calmel, C.F.X.
National Catholic Educational Assoc.
85th Annual Convention
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Chairperson: Lawrence M. Bowman
NCEA Department: Secondary

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For the past several years the social studies and history teacher in the public secondary school has been gripped by a state of siege mentality. This psychological state of mind has been matched in the private/Catholic secondary school by complacency and smugness fostered by the belief that private/Catholic secondary schools are, somehow, immune or isolated from the current educational crisis. This crisis mentality has been caused, in part, by declining enrollment and interest in the social studies area by current eligible students,[1] and, further exacerbated by the constant stream of surveys and reports from various ad hoc groups, committees and commissions examining the status of the profession, and, the success, or, lack thereof, of social studies instruction.[2] It is not the purpose of this speaker to examine the reasons for the decline of the social studies and history profession, but rather, to address the questions and charges raised by such surveys and reports.

Make no mistake, there <u>is</u> a crisis.[3] There is ample evidence to prove such a crisis of instruction exists today. For example, a recent survey of high school seniors by CBS affiliates in seven cities found the following alarming results: 25% of the surveyed students in Dallas, Texas could not identify the country south of Texas; 39% of the surveyed students in Boston could not name the six New England states; 50% of the surveyed students in Baltimore could not shade in the United States on an unmarked map; and, 48% of all of the surveyed seniors could not even name three nations that are found in Africa.[4] In, yet, another study, funded by the National

Endowment for the Humanities and conducted by Daine Ravitch and Chester Finn, and, reviewed by the American Historical Association, the authors found that American 17 year-olds could not answer correctly 54% of history questions of a basic nature; 33% did not know the meaning and significance of the Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision; 75% did not know when Lincoln was President; 70% could not identify the Magna Carta; and, 33% did not know where the phrase - "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" comes from.[5] In that same report, entitled, What Do Our 17 Year Olds Know?, Ravitch also noted the shocking lack of a sense of chronology our high school students have with such results that more than 66% of the surveyed students could not answer correctly when the Civil War occurred.[6]

In addition to formal studies, there is also ample anecdotal evidence that there is a crisis in social studies instruction. For example, in a recent issue of Perspectives, the American Historical Association Newsletter, Victoria Chandler recounted some of the answers submitted by her students in her course on Western Civilization. Among the more typical answers she received were:

-The atomic bomb was first used in 1975 by the United States to win the Vietnam War;
-The Romans honored their kings by building great pyramids for them to be buried in;
-Dr. Livingstone was found in the jungle by Lenin.
-Stalin was a very nice man who did wonderful things for his country;
-Chuck Oozo wrote some famous ideas (This was in reference to Jean Jacques Rosseau);
-In 1715, Columbus, an Englishman, discovered the New World.
-Most of the Spartans were good Christians;
-The greatest obstacle to the spread of Christianity was Roman Catholic Church; and,
-The famous Egyptologist and archaeologist, Rosetta

Stone, discovered hieroglyphics and Greek in 196 BC.[7]

There are many other recent surveys and reports that confirm these findings and relate the same educational horror story. Such reports and findings as the impressive, A Nation at Risk, E. D. Hirsch and Allan Bloom's, The Closing of the American Mind, and, Lynne Cheney's, American Memory are just a few of the outstanding reports and surveys on this problem. There are, yet, even further studies in preparation, such as that of the Bradley Commission, that, when published, will give us an even further understanding and knowledge of the scope of the educational crisis. In the midst of all of this educational bad news, the private/Catholic secondary schools remain calm and smug in the mistaken belief that this neither reflects, nor, will affect, the study and instruction of social studies and history in such schools. A recent study reviewed by the NCEA entitled, National Assessment of Educational Progress: 1983 - 1984, which examined writing skills of Catholic school students and found that such students are at, or, are above, the national average,[8] is one such report that can lead to over confidence, complacency, and smugness. They have, unfortunately, helped to enhance the growing illusion of private/Catholic secondary school superiority and immunity from the current crisis.

Reality and hard facts should awaken in all teachers of social studies and history, in private/Catholic secondary schools, the realization that the current crisis in the public school sector may be our crisis in the near future, if it hasn't already arrived. We are both part of the crisis, as well as, we are affected by the crisis. Such a position can quickly be

supported by many factors and developments, of which four come readily to my mind:

1. Results of Surveys: While we can be proud of the fact that students in Catholic secondary schools have achieved scores at, or, above the national average, there is also ample evidence in recent reports and surveys, that students of both private/Catholic schools as well as public schools are not what they should be.

2. Publication of Textbooks: Currently most private/Catholic secondary schools purchase their textbooks from the same publishers that sell to large public school districts. Whenever a significant school district in the public sector demands changes in content and format these publishers listen. Who of us, here, has not noticed the growth in the number and size of photographs and charts and white space at the expense of hard historical data and text? The state of California, for example, accounts for 11% of the textbook sales of the nation.[9]

3. Accreditation: Let us not forget that many states formally accredit and set standards and requirements for graduation from secondary school - both public and private/Catholic. In addition, membership of many private/Catholic secondary schools in associations such as the Middle States Association and New England States Association have an impact on what we offer, teach and set as our standard.

4. The Deficiencies and Expectations of our Students Themselves: Many students in the private/Catholic secondary school are products of the public school system bringing with themselves deficiencies in both knowledge and skills that we must deal with. Also, many of our students have expectations of going on to work for degrees in state colleges and public educational institutions. These educational entities can also affect what we teach, and, how we teach, by the requirements they set for acceptance and admission.

Thus, the educational crisis is currently becoming our own crisis as we are increasingly forced to deal with students who have marginal skills in reading and writing; with textbooks that change frequently; with new requirements and standards set by

state governments; and, finally, with admissions requirements and policies set by institutions of higher education.

Over the past several years, education experts have sought a solution to the educational crisis by, first, finding the causes behind the crisis, and, then, applying the appropriate educational remedy. In the belief that, finding the root causes of our present educational disaster, we could create an educational "lode stone" that could change disaster into success, educators have identified and belabored problem areas that many of us, today, would also agree upon as contributing to the current crisis. Millions have been allocated and spent by the Federal and State governments, as well as, by school systems and individual schools, to tackle and deal with these problems, yet, the educational crisis still continues.

At first, educational researchers focused their energies on problems and innovative programs that concerned students directly. Recently, Jacques Barzun, in his remarks at the O.A.H. Convention in New York City in 1986, agreed with Professor Ravitch that two of the persistent obstacles confronted by good teachers today are, "the pupil's inability to read, and, the bugbear of relevance."[10] These are not new problems - how many of us can remember the same charges being made in the 1950's and 1960's? Millions have been spent on reading programs and, yet, not only have students continued to indicate lack of success in learning material, but, also, students have even shown a decline in reading ability since the 1960's. In addition, how many teachers here today have taught students who, at first, did not read at an acceptable level upon entering school and, still, not

only learned the material but also improved his reading skills! The problem of relevance has also been a long standing problem that seems to defy solution. The innovation of electives by Dr. Charles W. Eliot of Harvard in the late 19th century and, more recently, the mini courses of the late 1960's and early 1970's were attempts to deal with this problem. However, in spite of making the courses more relevant to the individual student, there have been complaints that students still are not learning what is required of them, and, there is the usual recurrent talk of returning to "Core Curriculums", "Required Courses", and "Back to Basics".

In 1978 a national study by the National Parent Teacher Association found that students spent 15,000 hours in front of television, and 11,000 hours attending school by the time the students graduate from high school.[11] Educators thought they had finally isolated the educational culprit, yet, in 1988, we now know that, since 1978, the total time students spent in front of the TV has in fact leveled off, or, as the national networks seem to indicate, TV viewing has declined. Despite the leveling off of TV viewing, or even its decline, we have continued to note further erosion of student academic achievement. In addition to this we have seen millions spent in the belief that if you can't beat them join them, buying TV's, VCR's and audio visual materials to use in the instruction of our problem students.

Educators, since the 1980's, have been warned by the press and social commentators of the growing materialism and utilitarianism found among our students today. The attitude of our students that something is not worth learning, if it cannot

be readily turned into cash, seems to be all pervasive today. Yet, doesn't the educational community share responsibility for fostering, and even exacerbating, the situation? For example, the state of New Jersey has a "Career Development Program" which basically appeals to students on the basis: "If you study this subject well, then, you can get this career; and, this career can earn you money."

We have also been told that the reason for declining scores and achievement can be laid at the feet of indifferent parents. This might be so, but , how many of us here, today, had students with indifferent parents, and, who, in spite of this, earned high grades and were noted for high achievement? And, how many of us, today, have experienced the disappointment of concerned parents frustrated by their son's or daughter's lack of achievement and success?

We could also add to the list of reasons for the current educational crisis in the social studies area: drugs, alcohol, peer pressures, lack of discipline, poor study skills, and many, many more. The list seems to be endless, and, despite attempts to develop solutions and innovative programs to deal with these, and millions spent, no improvement seems to be in sight.

Recently, the focus of our educational investigators seems to be the teachers themselves. Attention has now focused on, including the obligatory millions in federal and state funding, retraining teachers, setting minimum competency standards for teachers, creating new teacher competency tests, and, creating new programs for teacher certification. Currently, however, teacher bashing seems to be a sport that is in decline. Blaming

teachers for the educational crisis - especially in the social studies area - was too simplistic an answer to what was apparently a highly complex problem. Despite the usual horror stories of incompetent teachers, I believe that the overwhelming majority of teachers today are dedicated professionals. How can it be said, then, that a relatively small number of teachers are the root cause of the educational crisis of such large proportions? Obviously, the answer has to lie elsewhere, especially in light of the fact that, after re-certifying teachers, having teachers take competency tests, and retraining teachers, students continue to evidence poor grasp of the most simple and elementary aspects of high school social studies and history curricula.

This brings us to the current debate confronting the educational community regarding how to solve our educational crisis. The basic underlying theories, upon which the debate stems, concern Process and Methods vs Content. It is somewhat surprising that, after more than a quarter of a century of debate since 1960 as to what went wrong with America's educational system, and, a myriad of studies, surveys and programs testifying to the complex nature of the educational crisis, educational leaders have settled on such a simplistic debate.

The simplistic debate of Process/Methods vs Content is also alarming in that it has split the educational community.[12] The political/educational left, which seemed to gain the ascendancy in the 1960's and 1970's, attacked the rigidity of our social studies curriculum and methodology as irrelevant. Such a position eventually gave us the Open Class Room, Group

Discussions, Role Playing, Simulations, TV and the VCR, the Audio Film Strip, and, finally, the much abused and maligned Mini Course. After investing a sizable portion of our educational dollars in developing such programs and approaches, we have found that achievement by American students continued to decline in that same period. Such programs and approaches in the later 1970's were attacked as frivolous and superficial.[13] Indeed, there were abuses and excesses, especially in the use of the Open Class Room and the Mini Course. I can recall an Open Classroom on a Colonial Village developed in the early 1970's in which the first half of the year was spent building a Colonial Village; the first half of the second semester discussing and using the village for role playing; and, finally, the last half of the last semester taking down and storing away the parts of the village. The problem, with all of this, was that the curriculum called for a course in American History from pre Colonial Times to the Civil War - obviously the students missed some important facets of American History, especially if they had to take standardized tests on American History for college entrance requirements. I can also recall, in the same period, mini courses on house painting, and, the history of the comic book offered as part of a social studies curriculum. Such abuses obviously trivialized the importance of the social studies and history. Yet, in spite of these abuses and excesses, such educational experimenting and innovations gave all of us today additional weapons and tools in our fight to achieve excellence in social studies and history instruction.

The late 1970's and early 1980's saw a counterattack by the

educational right, which pointedly observed that such programs and approaches did not impart the essential educational material, knowledge and skills intended. The "Back to Basics" movement succeeded in bringing the nation back to a mind set of the 1950's and 1960's with an emphasis on content and skills, and, a de-emphasis of methods and process. Most of us in the Catholic secondary schools looked on in amusement as the public education sector of the nation, after embarking on an expensive quest and acquisition of new programs and approaches that most Catholic secondary schools could not afford, returned to the very same curriculum, methods and approaches they had formerly abandoned.

It appears that the "Back to Basics" movement and position is in the ascendancy today, but there is a fundamental division within the educational community as to what should be stressed as we educate our students in those basics and fundamentals. On one hand, we have many adherents who posit that we must stress basic skills in isolation from content and knowledge. This position further holds that separate courses be created and implemented in imparting basic skills. This would include, for example, a separate course in study skills, writing skills and so forth. Students, after acquiring these basic skills, would then have the tools to acquire, grasp, and, retain basic and fundamental content and knowledge.

On the other hand, there are those who, after condemning the educational abuses and excesses of the educational left in the 1960's and 1970's for such things as a "cafeteria style selection of mini courses",[14] suggest that content and knowledge should be stressed, and basic skills be acquired in the context of

teaching fundamental and basic content and knowledge.[15] Such educational leaders as, E.D. Hirsch, Lynne Chenny, and, Diane Ravitch seem to favor stressing content along with skills, however, the belief, that it is best to teach basic skills in isolation from content, seems to continue to hold the commanding position in the educational debate over the past several years.[16]

Like the educational left, the educational right, with the "Back to Basics" movement, has made important contributions toward the education of today's students in the social studies and history. There is little doubt that the re-emphasis of basic skills and knowledge has helped to halt further erosion in social studies and history instruction. New texts for students on basic study skills, such as Kenneth Standley's How to Study,[17] and, texts for teachers, such as Eunice Askov and Karlyn Kamm's Study Skills in the Content Areas,[18] while reflecting the current debate between process and content, are important tools in addressing some of the current academic deficiencies of our students.

The current debate, between adherents who wish to emphasize basic skills in isolation from content, and others, who wish to emphasize content, has also shed light and focused attention upon an issue in the teaching of social studies and history that is often ignored: the issue of DISCONTINUITY. This issue was addressed by Linda Rosenzweig in a recent issue of the History Teacher when she stated:

> Finally, our goals speak of process and of teaching historical thinking, but our practices suggest teaching information, a collection of facts and events often perceived as an endless succession of meaningless

trivia.[19]

Jacques Barzun also alluded to this problem when he said:

> The net effect (of discontinuity) is bits and pieces.....a composite of facts and terms arbitrarily picked out of the disciplines...and supposedly glued together around problems. What comes out in practice is certainly not discipline and hardly understanding, which would require long and serious study.[20]

What both Rosenzweig and Barzun allude to is the current danger that arises from an over-emphasis on facts, dates, and small bits of information - that we become so bound to our content, that we become slaves to it.[21] Obviously, we must, somehow, resist the compulsion to cover material in such a rigid fashion, because such irrational adherence to course outlines can destroy our student's enthusiasm for, and, interest in, social studies and history.[22] We must remember that our task as teachers is not only to impart knowledge and skills, but, also, to stimulate, motivate, and, inculcate interest and enthusiasm for our discipline. An important question that is raised by this issue is: What have we gained if we have succeeded in teaching facts and details, yet, failed to help our students see the interconnectedness of all that we have taught - and, worse, destroyed all interest in trying to relate all this knowledge to their individual lives and the world they live in?

The current debate over process and content has also helped to focus attention upon other dimensions of the issue of discontinuity: The lack of a complete and comprehensive program of sequential courses, and, the dearth of time allocated in present educational programs for social studies and history instruction. The lack of a complete program of sequential

courses was, also, addressed by Linda Rosenzweig when she cited statistics from a comparative study of students in social studies in the 4th grade and 11th grade. In this study, Rosenzweig noted that the 16 year olds failed to out perform their 9 year old counterparts on the same test.[23] She further observed that:

> The explanation most likely lies in the fact that geography like history is not consistently taught and used as students move through the upper grades. History curriculum developers must think more in terms of building skills and experiences related to a child's developmental level in a consistent 12 year process.[24]

How can students develop skills and understanding of content, if his contact with, and, immersion in, such material is fragmented, or, cut off for weeks, months, or even, years at a time? The math and science disciplines recognize the concept that a student's skills and knowledge are gradually built by one sequential course upon another. Why is it that the social studies and historical discipline continues to go over the same material, "but in more depth and detail", or, are content to zap their students with one or two courses before they flee through the school door?

Who of us here has not observed the erosion of both the number of courses and the amount of time required of students in the social studies and history instruction since 1960? In our drive to beat the Russians to the Moon in the 1960's, and, our fixation with the technological and scientific in the 1970's and 80's, many courses in the social studies and history were scaled back, gutted, or eliminated to make room for extra math and science courses in the overall educational program. The effect of our acquiescence to the dismantling of the social studies and

history curriculum is quite apparent today. Required history and social studies courses at the high school level declined from three to a present 1.3 nationwide average.[25]

The issue of the time spent for instruction in social studies and history is, also, related to the length of the school day. John Goodlad, Director of the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington, noted that the fewer the hours that are allocated for the school day, the less attention is given to content in such subject areas as social studies and history.[26] If students do not have regular instruction each day, or, at least, each week, they are less likely to see the relationship of what they are currently being taught with something that was taught the day or week before. Thus, we create the problem of students who fail to see cause and effect - how something, for example, that occurred in 1850, caused, or, affected what happened in 1860 and, even, 1960.

The length of the school day is not the only way content and process in the instruction of the social studies and history have been affected by dimensions of "discontinuity." Stephen Goode, in a recent article on year round schooling, noted that, while American students spent 180 days a year in school, Japanese and most West Europeans spend 240.[27] Experiments in the use of year round schooling in the United States have had mixed, inconclusive results. Such a highly controversial approach[28] raises a related question that we must all ask ourselves: If our shorter 180 day school year is so superior, then, why haven't the cost conscious and practical Japanese and West Europeans abandoned their 240 day school year and adopted our system, which

would obviously be more efficient and cost effective?

Solutions have been proposed to deal with discontinuity as a facet of both content and process, such as the development of more sequential courses, mandating more required time in social studies and history, and, extending the overall school day and year. In proposing such solutions, educators, associated with the debate between content and process, have developed new, and, as viewed by some, highly controversial and radical approaches. For example, the State of California, under the leadership of William Honig, Superintendent of Public Instruction, has proposed a mandatory 12 year program of sequential courses in the social studies and history with only one year, the 9th, left for electives.[29] Secretary of Education, William Bennett, has recently advocated requiring a minimum of three years in the social studies and history for all public high school students.[30] Finally, some school districts, with great student enrollment, such as Los Angeles, are seriously considering instituting year round schooling.[31]

Thus, it is quite apparent, today, that the current debate between process and content has successfully illuminated the basic problems and deficiencies in two of the three vital areas concerning social studies and history: Basic Skills, and, Basic/Fundamental Knowledge. The debate has further successfully proposed and implemented solutions and strategies to tackle these problems and deficiencies. It is of the greatest importance, however, that one pause here and reflect that the debate has, also, focused attention on a third vital, though problem, area: the imparting and inculcating of the attitudes, values and ethics

of our democratic society. There has, nevertheless, been little progress in solving the current failure of the national educational system in this area. The issue of imparting and inculcating the attitudes, values and ethics of our society to, and in, today's high school student, is a political hot potato. Today the public sector is quite wary and cautious about tackling this problem. Most, however, would agree that part of the educational crisis in the social studies and history is due to, as Paul Gagnon, professor of history at the University of Massachusetts (Boston), says:

> ...history and social studies courses at the high school level... have become watered down and value free... We started teaching "no fault, guilt-free history" where every culture is presented equally, and, every idea has the same weight.[32]

The public sector has been intimidated into inaction by both the political/educational left and right, including such national lobbies, as the Moral Majority, and, People for the American Way. While both sides agree that there is a need for educating today's high school students in the attitudes, values and ethics of American society, unanswered and hotly contested questions dominate the national debate as: "What attitudes?" and "Whose values and ethics?" As emotions and tensions rise, the educational atmosphere is poisoned by such insults and counter insults as: "Secular Humanist!" and, "Fundamentalist Religious Bigot!" Is it any wonder, then, that the public education sector is currently gripped by paralysis when dealing with attitudes, values and ethics?

It is primarily in this area that the American private/Catholic secondary school is a "Gift to the Nation."

Today, the American Catholic school system, that was once the sole domain of Catholic children, has opened its doors and facilities to non Catholic students in increasing numbers. Though many of these non Catholic students enter American Catholic secondary schools for a quality education, who can deny that many seek entrance and admission because of the attitudes, values and ethics which are the mainstay and hallmark of Catholic education?

Catholic schools have never been hesitant to tackle, even the most controversial, moral subjects and issues. In the context of social studies and history courses, presently being taught in Catholic secondary schools, such controversial issues as, Human Rights, Civil Rights, Civic Responsibilities, Racism, Bigotry, Discrimination, Prejudice, Nuclear War, Genocide, Abortion, Euthanasia, Capital Punishment, and Social Justice have been made part of the regular curriculum. The controversial pastoral letters of the American Bishops, on such issues as Nuclear War and the shortcomings of the American capitalist system and economy, have not been the exclusive domain of the religion and theology course, but, rather, have become part of the social studies curriculum because they reflect the very attitudes, and, thought of the fabric of American society today.[33]

Teachers of the social studies and history in Catholic secondary schools are, and, must continue to be, not only educational professionals, but, also, ministers of the mission of the Church to Catholic youth and to the world. Thus, we should not fall into the trap of becoming "better or superior public

schools", but, rather, we must persevere and continue as we have been directed in the Bishop's pastoral, To Teach as Jesus Did. Such an approach, in the past, has made Catholic secondary schools a "Gift to the Nation" and will ensure the permanence of this "Gift" in the future.

Finally, what can we recommend to improve an already excellent and important educational system? Before one can take up the matter of recommendations in the social studies area, one should first keep in mind something that the National Council for the Social Studies and eleven other educational and professional organizations declared in a joint statement in 1978. In this joint statement, entitled, The Essentials of Education, we are warned to be wary of several educational traps:

> A definition of the essentials of education should avoid three easy tendencies: to limit the essentials to the 3 R's in a society that is highly technological and complex; to define the essentials by what is tested at a time when tests are severely limited in what they measure; and, to reduce the essentials to a few skills, when it is obvious that people use a combination of skills, knowledge and feelings to come to terms with their world. By rejecting these simplistic tendencies, educators will avoid concentration on training in a few skills at the expense of preparing students for the changing world in which they must live.[34]

With the above warning in mind let us examine some of the methods and strategies we can adopt to meet the challenge of the educational crisis of today:

1. Every social studies department should have a departmental philosophy and a set of goals that relate to, and, complement, the school's philosophy and goals and the mission of the Church. The philosophy and goals should be developed by the department members so that all are convinced of their value and are committed to their achievement. Such a departmental philosophy and departmental goals should be evaluated along with the curriculum at regular intervals, and not

only when schools are up for accreditation.

2. Social studies departments should continue to strive, and push for, more courses and required time spent in the social studies and history. We must be realistic here. If a school has a two year social studies requirement, push for three years; if there is no requirement, then, push for one. Be realistic - don't ask for the world, but don't be content without it.

3. Whether you are for teaching basic skills in isolation as a separate course, or, are in favor of teaching basic skills along with and, in, the context of course content, investigate and implement curriculum requirements in basic skills and the testing of those skills.

4. Remain flexible and open to electives and mini courses. Not all electives and mini courses were bad in the past. The basic idea and principle of such courses is sound and fulfills the necessary purpose of relevance.

5. Beware of the problem of discontinuity. Attempt to develop a curriculum of sequential courses and insist on regular and frequent social studies instruction.

6. Emphasize course content and material, but do not become a slave to course outlines. Beware of allowing history and social studies courses to degenerate into a collection of bits of facts and dates.

7. Don't be afraid to tackle controversial issues in class - it is by covering such issues that we help bring the social studies and history alive for today's high school student.

8. Be wary of becoming too smug because of the success of Catholic education in the past. Investigate what are the problems and deficiencies of the students in your local area, and, find out what local school districts and elementary schools are doing to meet these deficiencies. Meet with, and, communicate with, members of other Catholic as well as public schools, and, share ideas and strategies.

9. Investigate and evaluate current social studies and history texts on a regular basis. If texts are found to be unacceptable, then, voice your concerns and criticisms to the local textbook distributor/salesman. Publishers are never going

to take Catholic secondary school social studies and history textbook needs seriously, if we continue to surrender and accept what is available.

10. Finally, remember and remain conscious of the fact that we are ministers of the Church's mission to our students and to the world. Thus, an intrinsic part of our instruction in social studies and history should continue to be the attitudes, values and ethics that are so important to the well being of our society and nation. If we do this successfully we can continue to be a unique and vital "Gift to the Nation".

FOOTNOTES

[1]Stephen Goode, "Time and Depth for History Studies," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 38, September 21, 1987, p. 61. Goode quotes a Chronicle of Higher Education study that the number of social science majors in U.S. colleges has declined by 49% from 1975 to 1985.

[2]Theodore S. Hamerow, "The Decline of the Historical Profession," The OAH Newsletter (Organization of American Historians), Vol. 15, No. 4, November 1987. Hamerow observes further that it is the profession that is in decline and not the study of history and historical learning.

[3]A conclusion supported by Thomas Benediktsson, "Canons to the Right," Aegis (Newsletter of the Institute for Humanities, Montclair State College [Montclair, New Jersey]), Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1987, p. 2.

[4]New York Times, October 29, 1987, p. 28 Article quotes Senator Stafford of Vermont who was about to participate in hearings on the status of the instruction of geography in U.S. schools. A related article by the Associated Press which appeared later in the Bergen Record, November 17, 1987, p. 3, during National Geography Awareness Week quoted Susan Munroe, a spokeswoman for the National Geographic Society: "Basic geography courses have fallen by the wayside replaced by programs with more modern sounding names like social science and urban affairs. Geography got lost."

[5]Perspectives (Newsletter of the American Historical Association), Vol. 25, No. 9, December 1987, p. 13.

[6]Update (Newsletter for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), Vol. 29, No. 8, November 1987, p. 1. This concern over chronology was earlier a topic of discussion and observation on the same report by Edward B. Fiske, "Schools Criticized on the Humanities," New York Times, September 8, 1987, p. B 8.

[7]Victoria Chandler, "What We Can Learn From Chuck Oozo," Perspectives, Vol. 24, No. 7, October 25, 1986, p. 25 - 27.

[8]NCEA NOTES, Vol. 20, No. 2, November 1987, p. 8.

[9]Stephen Goode, "Time and Depth for History Studies," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 38, September 21, 1987, p. 61, quoting William Honig, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of California.

[10]Jacques Barzun, "Teaching and Research in History Today," The History Teacher, Vol. 19, No. 4, August 1986, p. 524. This was part of an address made by Jacques Barzun at the Organization

of American Historians Convention in New York City on April 11, 1986 in which he reacted to statements made by Diane Ravitch quoted in New York Times Magazine in November 1985.

[11]National PTA Research, 1978

[12]Some aspects of the debate are examined by Tom Benediktsson, "Cannons to the Right," Aegis, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1987, p. 2. Benediktsson takes to task the political educational right including E. D. Hirsch.

[13]"Humanities Reports Renew Debate Over Process and Content," Update, (Newsletter for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), Vol. 29, No. 8, November 1987, p. 1.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Opinion of Judy Johnson, Director of Schenley High School Teacher Center, Pittsburg, Penn., quoted in Update, Vol. 29, No. 8, November 1987.

[16]Opinion of John Goodlad, Director of the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington quoted in Update, Vol. 29, No. 8, November 1987.

[17]Kenneth E. Standley, How to Study (Dale Seymour Publications, 1987) Standley in his Teacher's Guide to the student text stresses the importance of motivating the student and the flexibility and creativity of the teacher in implementing a "How to Study Program" (Teacher's Guide, Introduction, p. 1).

[18]Eunice N. Askov and Karlyn Kamm, Study Skills in the Content Areas (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1982). Askov and Kamm favor the instruction of Basic Skills in the context of, and along with content, (Preface, p. ix).

[19]Linda Rosenzweig and Thomas P. Weinland, "New Directions for the History Curriculum: A Challenge for the 1980's," The History Teacher, Vol. 19, No. 2, February 1986, p. 273.

[20]Jacques Barzun, "Teaching and Research in History Today," The History Teacher, Vol. 19, No. 4, August 1986, p. 522-523.

[21]Rosenzweig and Weinland, p. 273.

[22]Michael Burns, "How Should History Be Taught," New York Times, November 22, 1986. This position is also supported by the Joint Statement of the N.C.S.S. and 11 other educational organizations in 1978 entitled, Essentials of Education (N.C.S.S., 1978)

[23]Rosenzweig and Weinland, p. 272

[24]Ibid., 272 -273

[25]Stephen Goode, "Time and Depth for History Studies," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 38, September 21, 1987, p. 60. Goode notes in the same article that much more is demanded and required of students in foreign nations. He cites Paul Gagnon, professor of history at the University of Massachusetts stating that French students are required to take a 6 year cycle of history - 4 years of world history and 2 years of French history - p. 61.

[26]John Goodlad quoted in Update, Vol. 29, No. 8, November 1987.

[27]Stephen Goode, "Promotion of Year Round Schooling," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 52, December 28, 1987, p. 56.

[28]Examples of the controversy and of the mixed results of year round schooling can be seen in articles on Jefferson County, Colo., which is ending a 10 year experiment in year round schooling (New York Times, October 17. 1987, 1, 6:2) and on Los Angeles' proposal to start such a program (New York Times, October 20, 1987, 1, 17:1).

[29]Stephen Goode,"Time and Depth for History Studies," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 38, September 21, 1987, p. 60 - 61. Goode also lists the proposed sequential curriculum as follows: Grades - (1 - 3): Myths and Folklore of Foreign Cultures; (4): California State History; (5): American pre History and History from pre Colonial Times to the Revolution; (6): World History/Ancient; (7): World History/Middle Ages to Enlightenment; (8): American History/Revolution to World War I; (9): Electives; (10): Modern World History/Enlightenment to the Present; (11): United States in the 20th Century; and finally (12); two, one semester courses - Principles of American Democracy and Introduction to Economics.

[30]Secretary of Education, William Bennett's proposal was covered by each of the major network national news programs (ABC, 6:30 PM, NBC and CBS, 7:00 PM) on December 29, 1987.

[31]Stephen Goode, "Promotion of Year-round Schooling", Insight, Vol. 3, No. 52, December 28, 1987, p. 56.

[32]Stephen Goode quoting Paul Gagnon in "Time and Depth for History Studies," Insight, Vol. 3, No. 38, September 21, 1987.

[33]The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response and Sharing the Light of Faith are two such Pastorals.

[34]"Essentials of Education" This was a pamphlet published by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1978 containing a joint statement by the N.C.S.S. and 11 other professional and

educational organizations. p. 2.